

This memo summarizes the results of a field study of the relative effects of a programmed and lecture introduction to the American Thesis on a variety of attitudinal and performance measures. A full description of the study may be found in the AEB/OMS Research Memorandum to OTR, dated 1 March 1968.

Basically, the research approach was to work with two intact Intelligence Orientation Courses, one of which received the program (76 students), the other, the conventional lecture (53 students). Efforts were made throughout to maintain comparability between groups in all respects except in the mode of introducing the American Thesis. To the degree that this remained the only difference in treatment of the groups, and to the degree that the composition of the two groups was equated on such variables as sex, age, education, Agency experience, etc., we can attribute measured differences to the program/lecture variable. Of course, it is practically impossible to arrange all the conditions needed to meet these assumptions, as classes must be used as they are found and instructors can't hope to conduct themselves in one course running exactly as they did in an earlier running. However, the complexity of the situation provides no excuse for not attempting to clarify the impact of one's teaching efforts; the important thing is to approach the endeavor with some qualms and apply caution.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: Instructors rated each team in the oral reports seminars on overall effectiveness and on specific desired performances. There were no statistically reliable differences in the ratings given to teams in the program and lecture groups. Instructors also rated each team in the role playing seminars on the effectiveness with which it used communication techniques, facts, values, and on the overall quality of its performance. Program teams were seen as having made the more effective use of communication techniques and values. This is especially significant in that these two areas are given primary attention in the introduction to the American Thesis. Of course, the staff raters were witting of which group received which instructional mode and thus could hardly be called impartial observers.

Attitudes and views of students toward role playing were assessed with a five-item rating instrument. No reliable differences between program and lecture groups were found on any of the attitudinal comparisons. There was, however, a tendency for program teams run by two of the three staff instructors to regard role playing as more "worthwhile" than their lecture team counterparts. The reverse held true for the third instructor's teams.

A 20-item multiple choice test, designed to measure students' retention and application of the instructional materials, was administered to both groups following the introduction to the American Thesis. The program group performed significantly better than the lecture group on this objective test (80.6% correct vs. 72.7% correct). Eighty-five percent of the program group but only 65% of the lecture group received grades of 70 or above (100 points possible).

To further test students' application of the introductory materials, an essay exercise was given immediately prior to and following the American Thesis introduction. This exercise required students to respond to six questions, critical of U.S. policies and institutions, asked by foreigners of an American official abroad. Analyses indicated that the program group changed in the desired direction, i.e., showed evidence of having assimilated the major objectives of the American Thesis, significantly more frequently than the lecture group. However, there was no reliable difference between groups in the average magnitude of the before-after changes. Finally, objective test scores of students in the program group correlated positively with the frequency of changes in the desired direction on the essay test. This would indicate carryover from mastery of the program contents to an applied situation. This relationship did not obtain for the lecture group.

CONCLUSION: The results found in this study would seem to indicate that the programmed introduction was moderately more effective than the conventional lecture in conveying basic American Thesis objectives.